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MONTANA INDIAN RESERVATIONS

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WELCOME

Montana's Indian reservations are rich strongholds of Native American heritage. They are places where Indian culture can be experienced in sacred landscapes and at annual gatherings—where traditional dress is worn and rituals are performed as they have been for hundreds of years. Remarkable art and crafts reflect a unique connection between Montana Indians and the natural world.

There are seven reservations in Montana, representing eleven tribes. Each features a wealth of cultural institutions such as the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning, the Plenty Coups Memorial Museum in Pryor, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Museum in Lame Deer, and the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Culture Center and Museum in Poplar.

Special events on each reservation provide insight into traditional Indian culture. The Crow Fair Powwow, Rodeo and Race Meet is the largest Indian celebration in Montana. Other events in the state include the Standing Arrow Powwow held on the west shore of Flathead Lake, the Fort Belknap Mid-Winter Fair at the Fort Belknap Agency, and Rocky Boy's Annual Powwow.

Historic sites abound on all seven reservations. At the National Bison Range, on the Flathead Reservation, buffalo roam a 20,000-acre national wildlife refuge. The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, on the Crow Reservation, commemorates the site of the Indian victory over Custer's Seventh Calvary. The Assiniboine Village in Wolf Point re-creates a traditional Indian village where visitors are invited to experience the Assiniboine culture.

Northern Cheyenne Chief in Traditional Dress

MICHAEL S. SAMPLE

While Montana's Indians have worked to adapt to the changing world around them, they have kept the rich culture and traditions of their past. This heritage contributes immeasurably to the cultural flavor of Montana.

VISITING A RESERVATION

The reservations have special social and cultural/religious events and activities. Tribal powwows, hand games, shinny games and rodeos are social events usually open to the public. When visiting these events and public places such as museums, churches, and tribal facilities, it is important that guests show respect and courtesy.

Some cultural and religious ceremonies require special permission to attend or, in some cases, may not allow visitors at all. In some tribes a host family will extend a personal invitation to visitors and inform them of the correct protocol. All the tribes hold their religion and traditions in high regard. Sacred sites must not be defiled; there are places where mementos can be purchased on all reservations.

Powwows are social gatherings featuring generations-old drumming and dancing, and traditional dress and food. Visitors are welcome at powwows. Participants should bring lawn chairs or blankets, since seating is limited at most powwows. Guests may dance during the "Round Dance" (everyone dances in a circle) or when invited by the emcee. It should always be kept in mind that the dance area is sacred. Visitors may also participate in a "Giveaway," a sharing of accomplishment or good fortune.

All events and points of interest in this brochure are open to the public. When unsure if guests are allowed at other events or places on Montana Indian reservations, visitors should contact tribal offices.

Flash photography is not allowed during contests, and it is polite to ask dancers and singers before taking pictures.

Cultural and recreational activities can also be enjoyed outside of community events. The natural resources of Indian reservations are considered premier attractions. Visitors should be aware of tribal management practices that exist to protect the environment. Tribal offices should be contacted for regulations concerning recreation.

A HISTORY OF MONTANA'S

The history of the various modern tribes in the part of America we now call "Montana," is characterized by years of constant movement for many of them. They traversed the plains to follow the bison and then retreated in intertribal struggles for control of hunting territory. Finally, with the bison nearly extinct and tribes decimated by battles with white men, there came the final move onto reservations, marking the end of an era.

Archeological evidence shows that Native Americans inhabited Montana more than 14,000 years ago. Artifacts indicate the Kootenai have roots in the area's prehistory. The Salish, the Pend d' Oreilles and the Crow were probably among the first "modern" Indians to join the Kootenai in Montana. The Kootenai

Crow women in elk teeth dresses

MICHAEL CRUMMETT

DATES RESERVATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED

(with main community and resident tribes)

Blackfeet (Browning)	1851	Blackfeet
Crow (Crow Agency)	1851	Crow
Flathead (Pablo)	1855	Salish, Kootenai & Pend d' Oreilles
Fort Belknap (Fort Belknap Agency & Harlem)	1888	Assiniboine & Gros Ventre
Fort Peck (Poplar)	1888	Assiniboine & Sioux
Northern Cheyenne (Lame Deer)	1884	Northern Cheyenne
Rocky Boy's (Box Elder)	1916	Chippewa-Cree

inhabited the mountainous terrain west of the divide, venturing only seasonally to the east for buffalo hunts. The Salish and the Pend d' Oreilles occupied territory as far east as the Bighorn Mountains. During the 1700s these three tribes shared common hunting and gathering grounds. With the signing of the Hellgate Treaty, their massive landholdings were ceded and the tribes now share the fertile ground of the Flathead Reservation.

The Chippewa and Cree were the latest tribal groups to come to Montana. They came from reservations outside the state late in the nineteenth century after Montana's reservation system was in existence. These tribes today are intermixed and use the name, "Chippewa-Cree," and claim the windswept Rocky Boy's Reservation in the north.

The majority of Montana's Indians arrived after 1700. By the time most Indians came to this area, white men's culture was already strongly felt. The horses introduced to Indians by Spaniards in the Southwest, and guns from white frontiersmen, became deciding factors in determining which tribes would dominate the Montana territory in a culture completely dependent upon the bison.

The bison-based economy deteriorated in the 1880s when several factors affected the future of Montana's Indians. Bison were hunted to near extinction, the Canadian and United States governments became the dominant force driving Indians from their lands, and white men's diseases diminished the population and faded the spirit of the Native Americans. By the 1870s large tracts of land, through various treaties and executive orders, were formally reserved for Indians.

Thus the reservations evolved. Today nine percent of the Montana land base is reservations. Not all of this land is still owned by Indians, but all is governed by tribal or federal law. Reservations are important, not only because Native Americans have strong spiritual ties to the land, but because reservations have become the Indians' last retreat and the last chance to preserve their culture. Now, the people of Montana's reservations are working to build strong economic bases so that their culture will survive and flourish with future generations of Indian people.

CALENDAR

JANUARY

First weekend
New Year's Powwow, Lame Deer, MT
406-477-6284 (Northern Cheyenne Reservation)

FEBRUARY

First weekend
Fort Belknap Mid-Winter Fair, Fort Belknap, MT
406-353-2205 (Fort Belknap Reservation)

APRIL

First week
Fort Belknap Education Conference and Powwow,
Fort Belknap Agency and Hays, MT
406-353-2205 (Fort Belknap Reservation)

MAY

Third weekend
Buffalo Feast and Powwow, St. Ignatius, MT
406-745-2951 (Flathead Reservation)

Memorial Day weekend
Northern Cheyenne Powwow and Rodeo, Lame Deer,
MT 406-477-6284 (Northern Cheyenne Reservation)

Date TBA
Head Start Mini Powwow, Pablo, MT
406-745-4509 (Flathead Reservation)

Dancers at the Iron Ring celebration on the Fort Peck Reservation

MICHAEL CRUMMETT

JUNE

Third weekend
Red Bottom Celebration, Frazer, MT
406-768-5155 (Fort Peck Reservation)

Fourth weekend
Badlands Celebration, Brockton, MT
406-768-5155 (Fort Peck Reservation)

JULY

National Bison Range, Flathead Reservation

STEVE WIRT

First week
Salish Powwow, Arlee, MT
406-849-5541 (Flathead Reservation)

First weekend
Fort Kipp Celebration, Fort Kipp, MT
406-768-5551 (Fort Peck Reservation)

July fourth weekend
Arlee Fourth of July Celebration, Arlee, MT
406-676-2389 or 406-883-3313 (Flathead Reservation)

Northern Cheyenne Powwow, Lame Deer, MT
406-477-6284 (Northern Cheyenne Reservation)

Second weekend
Wild Horse Stampede, Wolf Point, MT
406-768-5155 (Fort Peck Reservation)

Second week
North American Indian Days,
Blackfeet Tribal Fairgrounds, Browning, MT
406-338-7276 (Blackfeet Reservation)

Third weekend
Hays Community Fair and Rodeo, Hays, MT
406-353-2205 (Fort Belknap Reservation)

Hays Community Powwow, Hays, MT
406-253-2205 (Fort Belknap Reservation)

Iron Ring Celebration, Poplar, MT
406-768-5155 (Fort Peck Reservation)

Standing Arrow Powwow, Elmo, MT
406-849-5541 (Flathead Reservation)

Fourth weekend
Milk River Indian Days,
Fort Belknap Powwow Grounds, Fort Belknap, MT
406-353-2205 (Fort Belknap Reservation)

AUGUST

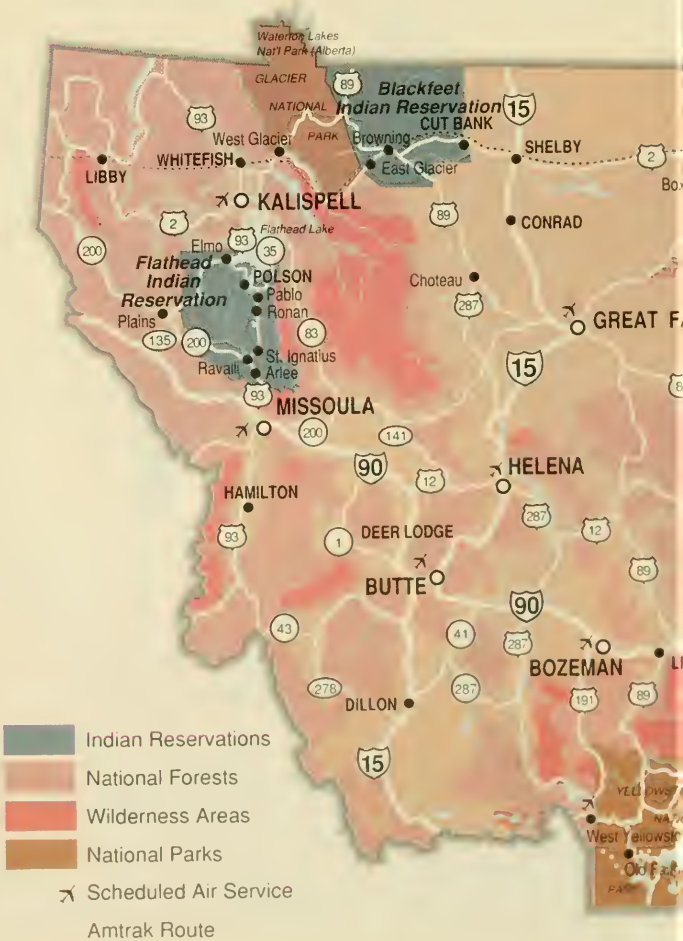
First weekend
Rocky Boy's Annual Powwow, Rocky Boy's Agency, MT
406-395-4478 (Rocky Boy's Reservation)

Wadopana Celebration, Wolf Point, MT
406-653-3476 (Fort Peck Reservation)

Second week
White River Cheyenne Powwow, Busby, MT
406-477-6284 (Northern Cheyenne Reservation)

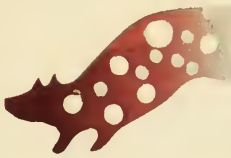
Third weekend
Crow Fair Powwow, Fairgrounds, Crow Agency, MT
406-638-2601 (Crow Reservation)

Fourth weekend
Oil Discovery Celebration, Poplar, MT
406-768-5155 (Fort Peck Reservation)



NOVEMBER

Third weekend
War Dance Championships, St. Ignatius, MT
406-883-3313 (Flathead Reservation)



DECEMBER

Fourth weekend
Christmas Powwow, Busby, MT
406-477-6284 (Northern Cheyenne Reservation)

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It is not accurate in miles or in geographic distances.
Consult the Montana Official Highway Map before travel
for accurate information.

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BLACKFEET

THE PEOPLE

The reservation is home to the Blackfeet tribe. Of the approximately 9,000 enrolled tribal members, there are about 7,000 living on or near the reservation. Nearly 27 percent of enrolled members are of three-fourths or greater Indian blood.

Horses on the Blackfeet Reservation

The Blackfeet Indians are commonly thought to have acquired their name because of the characteristic black color of their moccasins, painted or darkened with ashes.

LOCATION

The Blackfeet Reservation is in northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Its one-and-a-half million acres are bordered on the north by Canada and on the west by Glacier National Park.

ECONOMY

A manufacturing plant on the reservation produces pencils, pens and markers. An advertising company is the reservation's newest venture. Major uses of the land are ranching and farming. The principle crops are wheat, barley and hay.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Museum of the Plains Indian, U.S. 89, Browning, MT 406-338-2230
The museum exhibits the creative achievements of North American artists and craftspeople. A permanent exhibit displays artifacts of the Northern Plains Indians and two special galleries feature changing presentations. The museum also houses a gift shop. Next to the museum is "In the Footsteps of the Blackfeet," an authentic recreation of an encampment.

Blackfeet Community College, Browning, MT 406-338-5441
Two-year associate's degrees are offered in the Arts and Sciences. A new library is under construction.

Blackfeet Historic Site Tour, 406-338-7406
The historic site tours are half and full-day tours of the reservation and Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump. The tour begins at the Museum of the Plains Indian.

Sun Child Re-Creation Camp, 406-338-2882
Values, beliefs and traditions of the Plains Indians are taught. Participants sleep in tepees, build smokeless fires and dine on traditional foods.

For more information about the Blackfeet Reservation, contact:
Blackfeet Nation, P.O. Box 850, Browning, MT 59417 406-338-7276

CROW

THE PEOPLE

About 75 percent of the Crow tribe's approximately 7,000 enrolled members live on or near the reservation.

In the Hidatsa language, this tribe was called "Apsalooke," which means "children of the large-beaked bird." Other Indian tribes called them the "sharp people" because it was thought they were crafty and alert as the bird for which they were named, probably the raven. White men later misinterpreted the word as "crow."

LOCATION

The Crow Reservation is in south-central Montana, bordered by Wyoming on the south with its northwestern boundary about 10 miles from Billings.

ECONOMY

For many years the vast coal deposits under the eastern portion of the reservation remained untapped. One mine is now in operation and providing royalty income and employment to tribal members. The Crow operate only a small portion of their irrigated or dry farm acreage and about 30 percent of their grazing land.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Yellowtail Dam, Fort Smith, MT 406-666-2412
The canyon features spectacular scenery, wildlife viewing, boating, fishing, and camping. There are two visitors centers—one at Fort Smith and one at Yellowtail Dam.

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Reno-Benteen Battlefield, Crow Agency, MT 406-638-2621
These monuments commemorate the Indian victory over the Seventh Cavalry. The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument features museum exhibits, an interpretive center and ranger-led programs.

Chief Plenty Coups State Park, Pryor, MT 406-252-1289
This is the home of the well-known Crow Chief, Plenty Coups. There is a display of Crow artifacts and a scenic picnic area.

Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency, MT 406-638-7211
The college is home to the Institute for Micro-Business Development and offers associate's degrees in eight areas. Tours and lecture referrals are available.

For more information about the Crow Reservation, contact:
Crow Reservation, Crow Agency, MT 59022 406-638-2601

FLATHEAD

THE PEOPLE

The Flathead Indian Reservation is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes. The tribes are a combination of the Salish, the Pend D'Oreilles and the Kootenai. Of the approximately 6,700 enrolled tribal members, about 3,500 live on or near the reservation.

LOCATION

North of I-90 between Missoula and Kalispell, fertile valleys and towering mountain peaks of northwestern Montana are the motifs of the Flathead Reservation. The reservation comprises over 1.2 million acres.

ECONOMY

Montana Power Company pays the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes $9.4 million annually to lease land on which the Kerr Dam is situated, near Polson. Potential for development of additional hydroelectric power sites and recreation areas promises additional income in the future. The reservation also derives income from logging and Christmas tree sales.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Agnes Vanderburg Cultural Camp, Ravalli, MT 406-745-4572
The camp teaches language, crafts, customs and lore of Salish and Pend d'Oreille people. The classes are free and held summer months.

Flathead Indian Museum, St. Ignatius, MT 406-745-2951
Native American crafts and artifacts are featured.

Flathead Lake State Park, 406-752-5501
Flathead is the largest freshwater lake in the West. Points of interest on the lake include Wild Horse Island (Kwtkunk'mi in the Kootenai language) and six other scenic state units (five on the reservation): Finley Point, Elmo, Yellow Bay, Big Arm, Wayfarers and West Shore. Except for Wild Horse Island, all units offer camping, fishing, boating and swimming.

Four Winds Historic Village, St. Ignatius, MT 406-745-4336
The village highlights culture and artifacts of Native Americans.

The National Bison Range / Pablo National Wildlife Refuge, Moiese, MT 406-644-2211
Approximately 300 readily visible bison roam nearly 20,000 acres of natural grassland. Visitors are also likely to see elk, bighorn sheep, antelope and deer on self-guided auto tours, year-round.

Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge and State Wildlife Management Area, Ronan, MT 406-644-2211
This area is one of Montana's designated Wildlife Viewing sites. It is an exceptional wetland complex, prime for birdwatching.

St. Ignatius Mission, St. Ignatius, MT 406-745-2768
Established in 1854, the mission was built by Native Americans under the direction of Catholic missionaries. There are 58 original murals by Brother Joseph Carignano on its walls and ceiling. The Mission Range of mountains provides a striking backdrop for the mission.

Salish-Kootenai Community College, Pablo, MT 406-675-4800
The college offers tours of campus by appointment.

Sqelix'u Aqfmak nik Cultural Center, East of the Kicking Horse Job Corps Center, Salish Kootenai Nation Park, MT 406-675-0160
"The Peoples" center for preservation of Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille lifestyles is scheduled to open in 1995.

For more information about the Flathead Reservation, contact:
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, P.O. Box 278, Pablo, MT 59855 406-675-2700

FORT BELKNAP

THE PEOPLE

The Fort Belknap Reservation is home to two tribes, the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventre, with a combined enrollment of about 2,800.

LOCATION

The combined reservation and additional tribal lands encompass 705,067 acres of the plains and grasslands of north-central Montana.

ECONOMY

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the tribe are the major employers. The reservation is working to develop tourism and a market for handcrafted Native American arts and crafts.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Fort Belknap Community College, Fort Belknap Agency, MT 406-353-2607
Two-year associate's degrees in the Arts and Sciences are offered, along with one-year certificates. The Tribal Archives are located on campus, along with a student-built library.

Fort Belknap Tourism Office and Information Center, Harlem, MT 406-353-2205
The Information Center also houses Fort Belknap Ventures, which features handcrafted Native American arts and crafts. Staff provide tours of the Mission, Snake Butte, ancient tepee rings and the tribal buffalo pasture.

Drummer at Milk River Indian Days, Fort Belknap Reservation

Mission Canyon / Natural Bridge, South of Hays
This scenic recreational canyon has picnic and camping areas. The Natural Bridge, Wilson Park, Devil's Kitchen, Needle Eye, and Kid Curry's Hideout are some of the most popular attractions.

Saint Paul's Mission Church, Hays, MT 406-353-2205
The mission was established in 1887 by the Bureau of Catholic Missions. Today, it serves as a kindergarten-through-eighth grade school.

For more information about the Fort Belknap Reservation, contact:
Fort Belknap Tourism Office, R.R. 1, Box 66, Fort Belknap Agency, Harlem, MT 59526 406-353-2205

FORT PECK

THE PEOPLE

About 6,800 Assiniboine and Sioux live on the Fort Peck Reservation with another approximately 3,900 tribal members living off the reservation.

LOCATION

The Fort Peck Reservation is in northeastern Montana, 40 miles west of the North Dakota border, and 50 miles south of the Canadian border, with the Missouri River defining its southern perimeter. It includes more than two million acres of land.

ECONOMY

A prosperous industrial park in Poplar is one of the largest employers in Montana. A variety of enterprises, including metal fabrication and production sewing are housed here. Other industries, including an electronics manufacturer, flourish on the reservation. Farming, ranching, and oil extraction also play a part in the reservation economy.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Culture Center and Museum, Poplar, MT 406-768-5155
The Culture Center and Museum features permanent exhibits of Assiniboine and Sioux heritage, arts and crafts.

Fort Peck Community College, Poplar, MT 406-768-5551
The college offers associate's degrees in the Arts and Sciences, along with one-year certificates. There is a tribal law library on campus, and a cultural center is planned.

Assiniboine Village, Wolf Point, MT 406-653-1009
This is a traditional Assiniboine village where visitors can witness cultural practices of the tribe.

For more information about the Fort Peck Reservation, contact:
Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, P.O. Box 1027, Poplar, MT 59255 406-768-5155

NORTHERN CHEYENNE

THE PEOPLE

Approximately 5,600 Northern Cheyenne, along with members of other tribes, live on the reservation.

LOCATION

The rugged country of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation is in southeastern Montana. It covers 445,000 acres and is bounded on the east by the Tongue River and on the west by the Crow Reservation.

ECONOMY

Major employers include the St. Labre Indian School, the federal government, tribal government, power companies and construction companies. In the future, the tribe plans to mine the large coal deposit under the reservation.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Chief Two Moons Monument, Busby, MT 406-477-6253
This historic monument was built in 1936 in memory of Chief Two Moons, who participated in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Dull Knife Memorial College, Lame Deer, MT 406-477-6215
Associate's degrees in the Arts and Sciences are offered, along with vocational programs. The John Woodenlegs Memorial Library is a part of the college.

Northern Cheyenne Tribal Museum, Lame Deer, MT 406-477-6284
The museum presents the history and a look at the culture of Cheyenne Indians. The Craft Center offers beadwork and other crafts.

St. Labre Indian School, Ashland, MT 406-784-2200
This school was established in 1884 by the Franciscan Order. The visitors center, museum and gallery are important showplaces of Cheyenne heritage and art.

For more information about the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, contact:
Northern Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 328, Lame Deer, MT 59043 406-477-6253

ROCKY BOY'S

THE PEOPLE

Rocky Boy's provides a home for about 2,500 members of the Chippewa-Cree tribe.

The name "Rocky Boy" was derived from the name of a leader of a band of Chippewa Indians. It actually meant "Stone Child," but it was not translated correctly from Chippewa into English, and "Rocky Boy" evolved.

LOCATION

Rocky Boy's Reservation is near the Canadian border, in north-central Montana. It is graced by the Bears Paw Mountains, which provide a dramatic contrast to the flat bottomlands of this area.

ECONOMY

Rocky Boy's residents who work on the reservation are employed by the schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service and tribal government. There is also some wheat farming and post and pole production. The tribe is actively working toward

Sundance Lodges on Rocky Boy's Reservation

development of its natural resources to be able to provide more jobs and income for its people.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Stone Child College, Rocky Boy's Agency, MT 406-395-4269
A two-year college, Stone Child offers associate's degrees in the Arts and Sciences. There are future plans for a cultural center on campus.

For more information about the Rocky Boy's Reservation, contact:
The Chippewa-Cree Business Committee, Box 544, Rocky Boy Route, Box Elder, MT 59521 406-395-4282

TRAVEL MONTANA

As the first Americans, we (Indian People) created the first tourism bureaus. We love this beautiful earth, in all its mystique and we are honored to now share it with others. We have been playing good hosts for the past 500 years, a way of life grounded in the generosity of the Indian spirit. A spirit that can still be experienced when you visit our homelands.

Henri Mann, Ph.D.

For general information on Montana's Indian reservations, contact:

Office of Indian Affairs
Room 202, State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-3702

For a vacation planning packet, call:

Travel Montana
Department of Commerce
406-444-2654 **1-800-541-1447**
(out-of-state)

PLEASE NOTE:
The information in this guide may have changed since its publication. Verify all information before travel. Every effort has been made to include a representative selection of events and points of interest. Visitors should contact the reservations to find out about more recreational and educational opportunities.

This brochure was produced by Travel Montana in cooperation with Montana's Indian reservations.

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